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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2478

Oct. 5, 1990

AGRICULTURAL TRADE REFORM remains a major stumbling block in the GATT trade talks. "Indeed, it threatens to bring down the rest of the round," says President George Bush. We need to resolve the agricultural issues successfully if we are to have an agreement and we must let farmers compete with farmers instead of competing against the deep pockets of government treasuries, he says. **Contact: Kelly Shipp (202) 447-4623.**

SLOWED ECONOMIC GROWTH -- The recent hike in crude oil prices will cut the world's output & slow production in most countries, USDA economists say. Higher inflation & lower demand are likely to reinforce the divergent growth trends in the industrial bloc -- raising the risk of a recession in North America but leaving East Asia & Western Europe with strong economic activity. Large petroleum stocks, stronger economies and more energy-efficient industries will cushion the industrial economies' adjustment to higher oil prices. **Contact: Art Commen (202) 786-9475.**

FARM LEGISLATION PENDING IN CONGRESS still needs a lot of work to help farmers become more competitive and to keep programs from straying from the market-oriented principle of the 1985 farm bill, says Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter. Listen to American farmers, he says, they don't want their hands tied. "Let's give American farmers a bill that lets them compete," says Yeutter. "A bill that lets the Europeans know we are serious about selling in international markets. A bill that lets the United States enter the Uruguay Round negotiations in a strong position to battle against barriers to agricultural trade." **Contact: Kelly Shipp (202) 447-4623.**

AN EXPERIMENTAL LIVE VACCINE developed by a USDA research team appears to be 100 percent effective in protecting young chickens against coccidiosis, a serious poultry disease. "Of 200 chickens we orally vaccinated, none became ill when exposed to the coccidial parasite," says USDA Microbiologist Mark C. Jenkins, who heads the research team. Jenkins says the vaccine consists mainly of a preparation of the infective stage of the parasite that has been bombarded with X-rays. **Contact: Mark C. Jenkins (301) 344-8054.**

SEAFOOD CONSUMPTION RISES -- U.S. per capita seafood consumption was estimated at 15.9 pounds in 1989, a 5 percent increase above 1988's figure and .2 pounds higher than the record set in 1987. Seafood consumption has risen in eight of the last ten years and is up 24 percent since 1980. Catfish continues to lead in U.S. aquacultural production. After rising 16 percent in 1989, catfish processing volume in the first seven months of 1990 was 11 percent higher than a year earlier. From September 1989 to September 1990, trout sales increased 7 percent in the U.S. **Contact: David Harvey (202) 786-1888.**

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FARM INCOME STILL A RECORD -- Despite recent commodity developments, farm income will still be a record, USDA economists say. Recent commodity market developments point to lower season-average prices for corn, wheat and milk. However, these changes will have offsetting effects on U.S. farm incomes and most of the impacts will be felt next year. For example, lower corn prices stand to increase livestock operators' incomes, but trim corn producers' market receipts. Government payments to both corn & wheat farmers are expected to go up; but corn deficiency payments won't be made until 1991. **Contact:** Greg Gajewski or Nathan Childs (202) 786-3313.

FOOD STAMP AGENCY GETS AWARD -- The United Council on Welfare Fraud has honored USDA's Food & Nutrition Service for its leadership role in detecting and preventing fraud in the Food Stamp Program. **Betty Jo Nelsen**, administrator of FNS, accepted the council's **Dorothy M. Forney Award** in San Antonio, Texas, recently. This is the first time the council's highest award has been presented to a group, rather than an individual. **Contact:** United Council on Welfare Fraud (214) 767-0256.

AGRICULTURE IS THE SCIENCE OR ART of cultivating land in the raising of crops; husbandry; farming. However, it is much more. A recent National Academy of Sciences report, "Agricultural Literacy: New Directions for Education," says: "Agriculture is too important a topic to be taught only to the relatively small percentage of students considering careers in agriculture and pursuing vocational agriculture studies." At least some instruction about ag should be offered to all students, the reports say, regardless of their career goals or whether they are urban, suburban or rural. **Contact:** Bud Kerr (202) 401-4640.

FARMERS MADE LITTLE CHANGE in 1990 cropland use, USDA economists say. However, cropland harvested in 1990 is expected to be up slightly, with less fallow & fewer acres of summer fallow as soil moisture conditions improved over the midcontinent & much of the eastern region. Ground water supplies enabled farmers to maintain near-normal irrigation, even in the face of continued drought in the West. Farmers are continuing to carry out the conservation provisions of the 1985 farm bill by adopting practices that reduce erosion & enhance water quality. **Contact:** Merritt Padgitt (202) 786-1433.

NEMATODES & BACTERIA GANG UP -- Microscopic worms -- nematodes -- & a hungry bacterial companion in the soil may help citrus growers control citrus weevils. A **William J. Schroeder**, USDA scientist in Orlando, Fla., has found the bacteria & three species of nematodes can help orange, lemon, lime & grapefruit growers save million of dollars in crop damage from the citrus weevil. The bacteria depend on the nematodes to hunt down weevil larvae. Once the nematodes enter a larvae's body, they release the bacteria. Then the bacteria return this favor by acting as the nematode's personal "chef." **Contact:** William J. Schroeder (407) 897-7379.

WORLD FOOD DAY is Tuesday, Oct. 16. USDA Radio & TV staffers are planning special coverage of events in & around USDA, including proceedings by President **George Bush** in the White House Rose Garden & USDA officials attending a local school lunch program.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1739 -- This week, **Brenda Curtis** takes an in-depth look at the massive food & consumer programs USDA administers. Brenda talks with Assistant Secretary of Agriculture **Catherine Bertini** about changes in the Food Stamp Program, new menus for U.S. school children & the successful Women, Infant's & Children's Program. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1221 -- Food stamp use is up; controversial farm art; chipmunk troubles; air quality & your home; fresh fruit year round. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1728 -- USDA News Highlights; soybean loan rates; ethanol uncertainties; farmers' lung; drinker systems for broilers. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1340 -- "Startling" research; selenium testing, bluetongue test; booster shots for calves; bruise abatement for apples. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Tues., Oct. 16, milk production, weekly weather & crop outlook; Wed., Oct. 17, horticultural exports, ag inputs report; Fri., Oct. 19, ag outlook, catfish report.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

(Week of Oct. 4, 6 & 8)

FEATURES -- **DeBoria Janifer** reports on farm safety practices; **Lynn Wyvill** reports on the environmental benefits of a healthy lawn; **Artis Ford** reports on improving cotton yields; **Mike Thomas** reports on a new beef breed; & **Joe Courson** reports on restoring old homes.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA Chief Meteorologist **Norton Strommen** on weather & crop development; USDA Economist **David Harvey** on catfish industry; USDA Economist **Merritt Padgitt** on agricultural resources; USDA Economist **Steve Milmoe** on ag trade; USDA Economist **Ron Gustafson** on livestock & poultry production; & USDA Economist **Greg Gajewski** on farm exports.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **Lynn Wyvill** reports on pig farrowing options; **Pat O'Leary** reports on wholesale marketing of farm goods; & **Deboria Janifer** reports on new pepper varieties.

Available on Satellite **Westar IV**, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Transponder 12D (Channel 23)
SATURDAY 10:30 - 11:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 10D (Channel 19)
MONDAY 8:30 - 9:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 12D (Channel 23)

OFFMIKE

GARDEN SPOT...of corn and bean country is how Gary Kinnett (WIAI, Danville, Ill.) describes the region his station serves. Corn harvest is averaging 135-165 bushels per acre, but corn borer infestation is bad in certain areas, dropping the majority of stalks on some acres. Soybean yields average 55-60 bushels. The pumpkin patch is producing 17-19 tons per acre, down from 23.

FARM PROGRESS SHOW...at Amana had higher attendance than expected during the three-day event -- about 301,000, says Hal Hanna (KXEL, Waterloo, Iowa). Because crops are behind schedule in the region, producers are concerned about an early frost or wet weather, which could further delay harvest. Hal says meat processing plants in the area are trying to produce an extra supply in case federal cutbacks cause an inspector shortage.

NEW VOICE...at KRVN, Lexington, Neb., is Mike LePorte, formerly of KMA, Shenandoah, Iowa. He joins Dewey Nelson and Rich Hawkins.

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Office of Public Affairs
Radio-TV Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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TOBACCO...is king in North Carolina. Ken Tanner (WRAL-TV/Tobacco Radio Net, Raleigh, N.C.) says flue-cured proceeds in the state should top \$1 billion. By comparison, cotton is forecast to bring in \$75 million. Ken says N.C. soybeans are averaging 26 bu/acre.

A GOOD YEAR...reveals itself in new equipment and houses, says Gail Hamilton (WTSO Madison, Wisc.), and he has noticed an increase in both items while traveling across the state. In Madison, the 1990 Dairy Expo this month is expected to attract 60,000 people, including 3,000 from outside the U.S. Gail says producers are harvesting their fourth cutting of alfalfa.

RAINFALL...totals in central Texas are 30 percent above normal, says Curt Lancaster (VSA Radio Network, San Angelo). Cotton crop is spotty, it needs hot & dry weather, but is getting the opposite. Curt says grass is doing well & aquifers are being recharged.

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division

